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# San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE JUSTICE CENTER MOVES FORWARD CITY ATTORNEY GIVEN UNANIMOUS SUPPORT**

***PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGN TO CREATE THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTER WINS SUPPORT FROM CITY 'S PUBLIC SAFETY &  
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE***

**San Diego--** The Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee voted unanimously to support San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn's revolutionary proposal to create the Domestic Violence Justice Center which will comprehensively address domestic violence cases and better assist victims and their children. The one of a kind Center is supported by San Diego Police Chief David Bejarano and was presented at the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee at the request of Councilmember Toni Atkins, Chair of PS&NS. A packed room of community supporters also spoke before the Committee. The Center would centralize under one roof the San Diego City Attorney and San Diego Police Department Domestic Violence Units and would include prosecutors, detectives, forensic medical personnel, social workers, probation and parole officers, advocates and other key agencies to meet the needs of victims and their children. It is a radically different approach from traditional criminal justice strategies.

"This Center will be like no other. It is community problem solving at its best" said City Attorney

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Gwinn. "First, it would be the only Center of its kind that will include the entire prosecution team. It will represent the best practices and models of child advocacy programs, sexual assault and domestic violence response teams in the nation that will be custom fit to San Diego's needs and strengths. The priority will be to put domestic violence victims and their children first and bring San Diego's resources to the victim as opposed to the victim having to seek help throughout the City and County."

Some of the other unique Center features that are envisioned include: full legal services, forensic exams, kids in court program, access to social services such as housing, mental health, child protective services, adult protective services, homeless team, counseling, military liaisons, and crisis workers.

City Attorney Gwinn and Assistant Police Chief Rulette Armstead outlined the plan in two phases. A temporary Center location has already been identified: 707 Broadway Street in downtown San Diego. This facility can accommodate 100 domestic violence professionals-- 68 professionals who work in the Domestic Violence Units of the City Attorney and Police Department, as well as numerous other key agencies. The second phase of the multi-million dollar project involves securing a permanent downtown location and expanding the services to include child abuse, elder abuse and sexual assault cases.

The Center was first conceptualized by City Attorney Gwinn in 1989, and seriously pursued by Chief Bejarano and his staff in 1999. After a two-year feasibility study and full community support, the City Attorney

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and Police Chief are committed to take the next step to make the Center a reality. The City Attorney intends to begin a massive fund-raising effort to seeking funds from private donors, the federal government, Foundations, City of San Diego, and others. The initial funding need is approximately \$1-million. The second phase, including building a specialized Center from the ground up, will cost approximately \$5-million.

The Committee directed the Manager and City Attorney to return to the full City Council with a funding proposal within 60 days.

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